

Murder sentence reduced after high court drug ruling

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DECEMBER 03, 2021 7:32 AM

The prison sentence for a man convicted of murder was reduced by more than seven years Thursday, following a recent Washington state Supreme Court decision.

A jury in 2019 found Matthew McGowan guilty of first-degree murder for tying Michael Boone to a tree and leaving him to die in the cold at a secluded homeless camp in Everett. He was sentenced to 45 years, the Everett Herald reported.

About a year later, the state Supreme Court struck down Washington's main drug possession statute. The ruling, known as the Blake decision, rendered one of McGowan's prior convictions moot, an appeals court decided.

That changed the sentencing range for McGowan. Under state guidelines, he faced a minimum of 34 years to 45 years — the sentence he received. The Blake decision reduced both ends of the range by about three years.

Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Bruce Weiss handed McGowan a sentence of over 38 years Thursday. McGowan's defense attorney pushed for just under 31 years in prison. A deputy prosecutor pushed for more than 41 years.

Hundreds of local defendants could get resentenced under the Blake ruling, Snohomish County Prosecutor Adam Cornell said Thursday. There are already about 200 pending resentencing. That number will only grow, he said.

"It's going to take years," Cornell said.